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Liberty of Conscience

Pleaded by several weighty

W/55

REASONS
ON THE
Behalf of the People of GOD
CALLED

QUAKERS;

AND ALSO,

On the behalf of others whose con-
sciences are tender towards God.

With a tender

Message of Love

UNTO THE

K I N G.

Written by *William Smith.*

London, Printed, and are to be sold by *William Warwick,* 1763.

Liberty of Conscience

Printed by J. W. Smith

R. A. C. S.

Behalf of GOD

Q. S.

On the behalf of others who con-
sider themselves as being

in the

Message of Love

INTO THE

K I N G

Written by William Smith

London, Printed, and are to be sold by W. W. Smith, 1862

THe holy God, whose wisdom is infinite and unsearchable, did make of one blood all nations, and by his power and wisdom he breathed into man the breath of Life, and endued him with pure Reason, and Understanding, in which he bore the Image of God in Righteousness and true Holiness, and therein he was made to differ from all sensuall Creatures; and as the pure Reason and Understanding did fill his inward man, he had true liberty in the same, and his Conscience was free as unto God, but the fall leading nature out of its course, the Earthly wisdom entred man, and man entred into it, and thereby lost his pure Reason and Understanding in which he was created, and became earthly, sensuall and devellish; in which nature mans Conscience is bound in Chains of darkness, and in the same nature he would binde the Conscience of others unto his own perswasions; but in the beginning it was not so: And by these Reasons following it may appear, that Liberty of Conscience in things pertaining to God, is of absolute necessity to be granted.

1. It being generally confessed, that man is degenerated from God, and that there is to be a Restauration by Jesus Christ; then in what way soever Christ doth appear in man to restore him unto God, he is not to be limited, or his appearance quenched by any Law, or Decree, though he may appear contrary to mans expectation.

2. It being generally confessed, that Christ is a Saviour; then he is not to be limited, or his appearance quenched, in what way soever he doth appear in man to work his salvation.

3. It being generally confessed, that all men have sinned, and that by Christ alone they must be redeemed; then he is not to be limited, or his appearance quenched, in what way soever he doth appear in man to work Redemption out of sin.

4. It being generally confessed, that sin separates from God, and that by Christ alone reconciliation must be made; then he is not to be limited, or his appearance quenched, in what way soever

Righteousness before God, and outward man, as before men.

power he doth appear in man to reconcile him unto God.

5. It being generally confessed, that God is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit, then the spirits manifestation is not to be limited or quenched, in what way soever it is made manifest in man to lead him into the worship of God.

6. It being generally confessed, that the spirit of truth leads into all truth, then the Spirit is not to be limited or quenched in what way soever it is made manifest in man to lead him in to all truth.

7. It being generally confessed, that all people should live a peaceable life, then the Spirit is not to be limited or quenched, in what way soever it is made manifest in man to kill the lust and strife, and to lead him in the way of peace.

8. It being generally confessed, that one man should do unto another as he would that another should do unto him, then the Spirit is not to be limited or quenched, in what way soever it is made manifest in man to beget Love in his heart, and to lead him to do good unto all men.

9. It being generally confessed, that all men should be subject unto Kings, and all in authority, then the Spirit is not to be limited or quenched, in what way soever it is made manifest in man, to crucifie his rebellious nature, and to subject every thought into the obedience of Christ, and so make him subject unto Kings, and all in authority.

10. It being generally confessed, that there is but one way and truth, then the Spirit is not to be limited or quenched, in what way soever it is made manifest in man to discover false ways and errors, and to lead him from them, and so bring him into the one way and truth according to his own pleasure.

Now the Quakers principle and practice answering these generall Reasons, there is a necessity why their Liberty should be granted in things pertaining to God.

1. Because they have received Christ Jesus in the appearance of his Light, and are followers of his Light in his own way, and by the Light they are restored into the pure Reason, Wisdom and Understanding in which their inward man stands innocently before God, and their outward man disposed in Righteousness

Righteousness, as in the beginning, I said unto you: I have said unto you

2. Because the Light of Christ in which he hath unto them appeared, and is their principle, is made unto them the power of God unto Salvation, and hath made them a peculiar people unto God.

3. Because the Light of Christ hath taken away their sin, and redeemed them from all iniquity, and hath made them a peculiar people unto God.

4. Because the Light of Christ hath broken down the partition wall of sin, and hath reconciled them unto God, and made their peace.

5. Because the Light of Christ hath given them the true knowledge of the one onely wise God, unto whom alone they bow, and him onely worship in the Light of the Spirit which they have received.

6. Because the Light of Christ hath manifested the truth in their hearts, and led them in the same by its own power.

7. Because the Light of Christ hath killed the lust and strife in them, and lead them to live a peaceable life in all Godliness and honesty.

8. Because the Light of Christ hath purged out deceit and hypocrisie, and begotten love in their hearts, that they cannot render Evil for Evil, but abide in the doctrine of Christ, and love their Enemies.

9. Because the Light of Christ hath crucified the rebellious nature in them, and made them subject to his own will, and thereby subjects them unto Kings, and all in authority, and they faithfully answer the Kings commands, wherein they can keep their Conscience clear in the sight of God, and what for Conscience sake they cannot answer, they patiently suffer under, and so dare do nothing against the truth, but for the truth, and walk with a Confidence void of offence towards God and man.

10. Because the Light of Christ hath discovered unto them the many false wayes and errors, and the great danger in them, and hath led them into the one way and truth, in which they have true peace with God, and serve him in singleness of their hearts; and thus hath Christ done that for them which no other

other could do; by which they know that it is he; and they are witnesses of it; power and life, giving him the glory over all, who is worthy for ever.

Now as it is evident by these Reasons, that the Quakers have received the holy and true principle of Light, that comes from Christ Jesus, and walk in the same, so they ought to have that Liberty granted them into which Christ hath restored them, they answering in principle and practice those things which by others are in words confessed, who say, but do not perform, which shews that they are in the weakness of the flesh, in which none can please God; but they that obey the Light and follow it, they do those things that are well-pleasing in his sight, and in the Light they are accepted; and in this principle and practice the Quakers have fulness of joy and peace.

Now as concerning others, who are not like-minded at present, and yet in their Conscience are tender towards God, and answers a Conscience unto God, according to the persuasion that he hath wrought in them by his Spirit, that they may not be suppressed, because there is not any thing which is begotten in tenderness towards God, that is to be crushed, bruised or quenched by force or violence of any Law, and whilest people behave themselves peaceably, the Liberty of their Conscience in things pertaining to God, ought not to be denied them; and where it is so, they that have power, do not to others as they would be done by, and so manifest that they are void of natural affections. And these things I write, that not any thing of God, though never so low and weak in its rising, may be crushed or quenched any way in its tender breathings; so will truth, peace, and righteousness flourish in the Earth in the same life, power and wisdom, which was before transgression and persecution, and put an end so it again.

A tender Message of Love unto the King.

O King, my speech is directed unto thee in all humbleness of mind; and from the tenderness of my heart I write
the

the matter which is laid upon me from the Most High; let it therefore be received and entertained by thee as a matter of greatest weight and concernment unto thee; for it is that only by which thou must either stand or fall. ^{Yea as much would} Be it therefore known unto thee, that the one blood of which God made all Nations, and in which is life, is the most Royal blood, and the most noble and renownable of all things, and by it alone all mankind have life, breath and being, amongst whom thou art one, O King; therefore thy Life not being in thy own hand, consider who hath prolonged thy dayes, and stretched out thy years, who hath helped thee in time of straits, tryals, distresses and afflictions, is it not God alone, who also can cut thy days short, and finish them in a moment? Let this consideration be with thee in thy private chamber, that thou mayest fear Before the Most High, and apply thy heart unto wisdom, for by Wisdom Kings reign, and Thrones are established, and in Wisdoms path thou wilt find the footsteps of those poor despised people called *Quakers*, who have hearkened to Wisdoms voice, and walk with her in her own way; therefore entreat them well; for they are a people redeemed by the Lord, and he hath chosen them out of Nations; Kindreds, Tongues and People, and they are as dear unto him as the apple of his eye, for he is their God, and they are his people, and of their innocency and peaceableness thou hast had large experience, and hast not found them at any time to be rebellious, though they have and do suffer great afflictions under thy power; yet this is their comfort in all their afflictions, that they do not suffer as evil-doers, but as innocent from all just offences, whereby they can approve their hearts unto God; and to the glory of God they can enquire of all men if at any time they have wronged, or injured, or evil entreated any man since the precious truth hath entered in their hearts, and if here in none can justly accuse them, as certainly none can; then the Lord will not hold them guiltless that do in any wise oppress them, for it is his cause they stand in, & the strength of men cannot overturn it. ^{Oh take counsel at the Light of Christ with} thou art enlightened, and in the Light thou wilt feel the Life

of these poor despised people; and as thou com'st to see their
 Life in the Light, then will thy love be towards them; but if
 thou hate the Light in thy own conscience, thou canst never
 know them as they are, and so instead of being a Nurturing-
 Father to them, thou mayest add to their afflictions, as being ag-
 norant of them; for none can know them, but in the Light of
 Christ, by which they are changed and renewed in the Spirit of
 their minds, and translated into the heavenly life, which the
 earthly Wisdom cannot comprehend. Oh! let no counsel en-
 ter into thy heart, to cause thee to turn against this people; but
 pursue thy promises which thou hast made, and so often renew-
 ed, touching Liberty of Conscience; for the performance of
 those promises will be of greater strength and security unto
 thee, then all the strength that others can give thee to defend
 thee, who with reasons would or may overcome thee to make
 thy promises void, and thereby cause thee to add afflictions up-
 on the innocent; who at this day bear the burden, though every
 way they seek thy good, and concerning whom I do believe
 that thou hast a persuasion in thy own heart touching their
 innocency; and if thou take heed unto that which doth at
 any time persuade thee that they are an innocent people, it
 will yet more persuade thee, and will work thy heart into love
 towards them, even as theirs is towards thee, to do thee good
 in any wise; and as they are a free-born people within thy do-
 minion, and have an outward portion in the same, with wives,
 children and families, who are ready to do good in all places
 where they are settled, let it not enter into thy heart to Spoile
 them, or banish them from their native birthrights and birthrights,
 and from husbands, wives, children and relations, who are not
 all like-minded in the Truth. Therefore, O King, have regard
 so this weighty matter, upon which thy own happiness so
 much dependeth; for if thou do well, it may be well with thee;
 but if otherwise, the Lord God will be clear when he judges.

Nottingham County-Gaol the 22 day of the 10 mo. 1663. I am a sincere lover of the
 oppressed soul. W. S.

THE END.

